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ABSTRACT

This document comprises Kansas state standards and guidelines for school psychological services. School psychological services are defined as special services which provide: (1) consultation with other school staff to plan individual programs to meet the special needs of children as indicated by interviews, behavioral evaluations, and tests; (2) the administration and interpretation of psychological and educational tests; (3) the consultation with teachers and other school staff concerning child behavior, modes of learning, and the development of a positive learning climate; and (4) psychological counseling for children and parents. Topics discussed include: the scope of services; responsibilities of school psychologists; differentiated duties among multiple school psychologists in local education agencies; practicum training requirements for certification of school psychology students; school psychology practicum students and interns; student/school psychologist ratio; supervision of school psychology services; training and certification; the requirements, duties, and responsibilities of school psychology paraprofessionals; and reimbursement. (TE)

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SUPPLEMENT FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

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Kansas State Board of Education
Approved 6/13/89

Strategic Directions for Kansas Education

The Kansas State Board of Education is charged with the general supervision of public education and other educational interests in the state. While clearly acknowledging the role and importance of local control, the State Board of Education has the responsibility to provide direction and leadership for the structuring of all state educational institutions under its jurisdiction.

The beginning place for determining the mission for the Kansas State Board of Education is the assumption that all Kansas citizens must be involved in their own learning and the learning of others. It is the combined effort of family, school, and community that makes possible the development of a high quality of life. It is the parent who is the first "teacher" of children. As we grow older, we learn that the school, the workplace, and the community support our lifelong learning and our training and retraining. The Board recognizes the responsibility it holds for Kansas educational systems and promoting quality education programs. The mission for Kansas education is that:

Each person will have the skills and values necessary to contribute to our evolving society.

We believe that the strategic directions for the structuring of Kansas education must be organized to:

- involve parents and support their efforts in the education of their children
- expand learner-focused approaches to curricula and instruction that can amplify the quality and scope of learning
- expand career, lifelong learning, and applied technical preparation which is relevant to the changed nature of work in an information society
- strengthen involvement of business and industry, public and private agencies, and community groups to increase the quality of education and the development of Kansas human resources
- strengthen educational quality and accountability through performance-based curricula and evaluation systems
- develop state and local information systems which may be used for systematic feedback for program improvement, evaluation, and sharing
- strengthen positive environments and develop environments which empower learners and staff
- extend and update the professional and leadership excellence of Kansas educators essential for quality education
- extend and expand the effective utilization of information technology which can increase information access for all learners of the state and productive learning for all Kansas educational institutions
- develop learning communities which involve educational institutions, public and private agencies, and community groups in more effective methods of meeting human resource development needs.

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Kansas State Education Building
120 East 10th Street Topeka, Kansas 66612

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SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

DEFINITION

School psychological services is defined by K.A.R. 91-12-22(ii) as *special services which provide consultation with other school staff to plan individual programs to meet the special needs of children as indicated by interviews, behavioral evaluations, and tests; the administration and interpretation of psychological and educational tests; the consultation with teachers and other school staff concerning child behavior, modes of learning and the development of a positive learning climate; and psychological counseling for children and parents.*

SCOPE OF SERVICES

School psychological services shall be utilized in the total school program to develop a positive learning climate and to assist in the achievement and adjustment of all children. The early recognition of a child's unique abilities may ensure greater benefit to society as well as greater satisfaction to the individual. The early detection and resolution of social, emotional, and academic problems in the regular classroom may prevent or minimize the need for intensive services at a later time. The services of a school psychologist, therefore, should be available to all students, parents, and school staff.

The related service of school psychology shall be provided as required to assist any exceptional child to benefit from special education (K.A.R. 91-12-62(a)). As a member of the special education services team, the school psychologist will assist in screening, diagnosis, and certification of exceptional children, and will participate in the educational planning and implementation of the special services needed. Special education services shall be provided in a continuum from supportive services for a child in the regular classroom to the more intensive services of special placement if needed. The school psychologist shall be available for assistance at any point on this continuum.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the school psychologist involve several areas, including improvement of the school learning climate, assistance to staff in promoting student social and emotional growth, promotion of good school/community relations, use of various intervention techniques, individual child study, development of educational plans for children with exceptional needs, and initiation and utilization of research. Although not limited to those listed, the responsibilities of the school psychologist may include such assignments as the following:

1. Assist in the development of school system procedures for assessing learning and/or social and emotional needs and recommending appropriate procedures for education growth.

2. Assist teachers in the development and implementation of classroom strategies for increasing classroom efficiency. This might include such things as encouraging the use of behavior management techniques, criterion referenced materials, or positive self-concept activities.
3. Assist in planning and conducting school staff inservice for awareness and understanding of exceptional children and in helping to program for mildly handicapped students.
4. Assist parents through group meetings or individual psychological counseling to develop a better understanding of normal and atypical child development and behavior and more positive parent-child relationships.
5. Confer with teachers, parents, and students regarding behavioral or emotional problems. Provide individual and group therapeutic intervention when training permits.
6. Provide referral and follow-through on referral to community specialists.
7. Assist the school in the development of public awareness activities which lead to a better understanding of the needs of all children.
8. Maintain a close working relationship with all school staff at the building level to assist in the early recognition and/or prevention of educational problems as well as in the implementation and assessment of corrective programs.
9. Provide assistance to school staff in the utilization of educational research.
10. Initiate educational research as approved by the local education agency.

The responsibilities of the school psychologist relate to the education and psychological growth of all children, those in special education as well as in regular education. In addition, the school psychologist has specific responsibilities related to special education services. These include involvement in screening and evaluation of exceptional children and in the development, implementation, and review of the child's individualized education program.

The responsibilities of the local education agency in each area are discussed in detail in the *State Plan for Special Education.* Referral to that document is necessary for a more complete discussion of the following starred (*) items.

Specific responsibilities of the school psychologist in the implementation of special education services are as follows:

1. Assist in the development and implementation of the local education agency screening program to tentatively identify children in need of special education services.
2.* Administer psychological and educational tests, conduct classroom observations and teacher and parent conferences, and assist in gathering information needed to identify and plan for the education of exceptional children. Data gathered may include information needed for preliminary planning or for comprehensive evaluation.
3.* Serve as a member of the multidisciplinary team responsible for comprehensive evaluations.

4.* Confer with parents or teachers regarding the results of special education evaluations and educational planning. This shall be done in cooperation with other special education staff as a coordinated effort. Communications with parents should at all times be understandable to them and cognizant of their concerns.

5.* Participate in staffing conferences held after completion of a comprehensive evaluation. Assist in formulation of the written individual educational program. Possess knowledge of community and State resources, such as private schools and other agencies, which may aid in appropriate planning.

6.* Participate in building level staffings on a regular basis. Assist in the periodic short term and annual review of the progress of special education students as needed.

7.* Provide psychological assistance to special education programs located in assigned buildings.

8.* Assist school personnel, parents, and students in the successful transition and reintegration of students returning to the local school from State institutions or other placements.

9.* Collect and compile data from comprehensive evaluations, teacher referrals, and other sources which indicate a need for additional special education services. Make this information available to the administrator of special education or other school administrator and assist where needed in the planning and development of such programs.

DIFFERENTIATED DUTIES

In local education agencies in which several school psychologists are employed, the responsibilities of the school psychologist as listed above may be differentiated to allow concentration of services. In view of the complexity of the competencies required, it may be preferable to assign the school psychologist to serve at only the elementary or secondary level, or, where needs justify, to assign by specialized service area, such as diagnosis, crisis intervention, and parent counseling. When such assignments are made, a description of the type of services to be provided shall be indicated in the local education agency's comprehensive plan, and those psychologists so assigned shall be indicated on the personnel sheet accompanying the annual survey form.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICUM STUDENTS

Training preparation of school psychologists includes work experience in school settings during a period designated as the *practicum.* This occurs prior to certification.

School psychology practicum students, placed in a district by a training institution, may participate in those activities normally carried out by the fully endorsed school psychologist. However, all psychological evaluations, including

testing and behavioral observations, shall be reviewed and signed by the supervising psychologist. The supervising psychologist shall be responsible for special education placement or programming decisions based upon this data. Practicum students, if employed by the local education agency, shall be considered paraprofessionals for reimbursement purposes (K.A.R. 91-12-62(c)).

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNS

School psychology interns who are provisionally endorsed as a school psychologist shall be considered professionals for reimbursement purposes (K.A.R. 91-12-62(d)). Renewal of the provisional endorsement may be available under certain circumstances. Supervision and professional support during the internship period should be provided by the parent training institution as well as by the local education agency.

STUDENT/SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST RATIO

The ratio of total student population to one school psychologist shall not exceed 1,500 to 1 (K.A.R. 91-12-62 (b)).

The student to school psychologist ratio shall be lowered under the following conditions:

(1) Assignment to areas where socio-economic conditions increase student and family problems;
(2) assignment to schools separated by considerable distance. Excessive travel time shall be avoided wherever possible;
(3) assignment to schools where a highly mobile population is served; or
(4) assignment to schools where a large number of programs for exceptional children are provided.

SUPERVISION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

In local education agencies employing several school psychologists, provision shall be made for coordination and supervision of the school psychological services.

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

School psychological services are provided by psychologists trained at the graduate level in the combined fields of psychology, general education, and special education. They have met special education requirements through criteria established by the State Board of Education and are certified by the Kansas State Department of Education. Completion of a school psychology training sequence is required.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PARAPROFESSIONALS

Requirements relating to paraprofessionals as delineated in K.A.R. 91-12-61 apply to school psychology paraprofessionals. Those requirements specific to school psychology are as follows:

Special education reimbursement shall be authorized for school psychology paraprofessionals who hold a baccalaureate degree in psychology or education, if:

(1) Responsibilities of the paraprofessional are planned and supervised by a qualified professional and are based on the person's competency to carry out the responsibilities. If needed, preservice or inservice training shall be provided in relation to the duties;

(2) the paraprofessional is not involved in psychological counseling or therapy, or in psychological evaluation;

(3) the paraprofessional is under the direct supervision of a certified school psychologist; and

(4) the paraprofessional holds a paraprofessional permit (K.A.R. 91-12-62(e)).

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Careful planning shall be employed in the development of the tasks assigned to the school psychology paraprofessional. Because of the importance of school psychological services in the lives of those persons receiving services, responsibilities shall be assigned to persons on the basis of their competency to carry them out. Where needed, preservice or inservice training shall be provided prior to the assumption of these duties.

Examples of tasks which may be appropriately assigned to a school psychology paraprofessional are—

a. Organize or schedule conferences with teachers or parents for school psychologists;
b. Record data during behavioral observations;
c. Assist teachers or psychologists in the implementation of a behavior management program;
d. Provide assistance in the scoring or recording of test data;
e. Provide support to individual students through role modeling and other activities planned by the school psychologist;
f. Prepare data for analysis, including graphing test results, preparing statistical tables, and summarizing information from questionnaires; and
g. Assist with individual or group screening.

REIMBURSEMENT

Special education reimbursement for certified school psychologists is available on the same basis as for other special education certificated personnel. Reimbursement for approved school psychology paraprofessionals is also available.